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February 14, 2023

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Finance Committee

**BILL:** SB 362 – Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics –  
Established

**POSITION:** Support

The Horizon Foundation is Howard County's community health foundation and the largest independent health philanthropy in the state of Maryland. We lead community change so everyone in Howard County can live a longer, better life.

**The Foundation is pleased to support SB 362 – Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics – Established.**

SB 362 requires the Maryland Department of Health to pursue the establishment of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCS) through a federal application process. CCBHCS are nonprofits with a special federal designation, similar to federally qualified health centers (FQHC). CCBHCS provide a comprehensive range of outpatient mental health and substance use treatment and care coordination, regardless of one's insurance status or ability to pay.

CCBHCS must provide nine core services, including services for children and youth, 24/7 crisis intervention, peer supports, substance use treatment, and primary health screening and monitoring. States that have implemented the model have seen increased access to care, reductions in emergency department and inpatient utilization, a mitigation of behavioral health workforce challenges, higher hospital engagement post-discharge, improved use of medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorder, and improved physical care integration.

Mental health is a top priority for the Horizon Foundation. Together with our many community partners and grantees, we have raised awareness through our Mental Health Film Festival, reached thousands of community members with our Emotional Support Human campaign, and helped the Howard County Public School System enhance its mental health supports – a program that is expanding to every public school in the County.

We have also worked to increase access to mental health crisis services through our work with the Greater Baltimore Regional Integrated Crisis Systems (GRBICS), as well as helped support the launch of Sheppard Pratt's new urgent care behavioral health clinic in Elkrige. At the same time, recent data shows that anxiety, depression, and other mental health indicators are on the rise. Adopting the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic model is a needed step to ensure our communities are properly served.

SB 362 will dramatically improve and expand access to mental and behavioral health care for Marylanders whose needs might otherwise go unmet. For this reason, the Horizon Foundation **SUPPORTS SB 362** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

Thank you for your consideration.